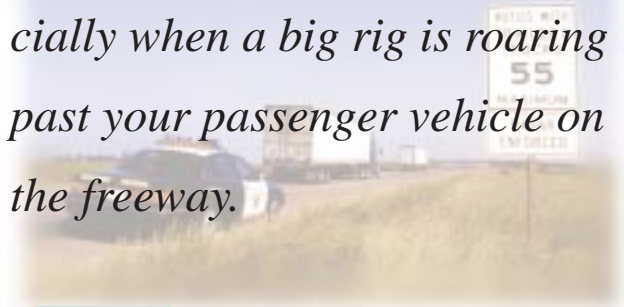


CHP Launches Truck Enforcement Campaign

Trucks are hard to ignore, especially when a big rig is roaring past your passenger vehicle on the freeway.



The CHP in May 1998 launched a focused truck enforcement campaign to slow speeding truckers, reduce tailgating and educate both truckers and the public.

“This program moves the enforcement focus from mechanical violations to driver error,” said CHP Commissioner D. O. Helmick.

The result has been a 67 percent increase in speed citations and a 71 percent increase in tailgating citations for the last seven months of 1998, compared to the same period in 1997.

The CHP and the trucking industry recognized early in 1998 that on-highway safety could be improved. For example, passenger vehicle crashes had declined significantly for the past five years, while truck crashes had remained virtually constant.

It is important to note that truck drivers involved in fatal crashes are less often the responsible parties. In 1997, truck drivers were found to be responsible in about one-third of the fatal crashes and in about half of injury crashes.

But despite the truckers’ less frequent at-fault status, public perception is fueled by the minority of big rigs powering past on the freeway.

“Of the citizen’s letters that reached me concerning trucks, the most common complaints were about speed and tailgating,” said Helmick. “Focusing our efforts on those two offenses went a long way toward increasing safety and improving the trucking industry’s reputation.”

Specially marked enforcement vehicles, use of radar, overtime and cooperation with the trucking industry are the tools used to address speed and tailgating.

Officers also are looking for logbook violations with the goal of getting tired drivers off the road. Truckers must keep a log to demonstrate they have complied with regulations that require specific hours of rest.

The CHP and the California Trucking Association (CTA) are cooperating on the awareness campaign, with the association reaching out to truckers. The two groups have a long history of partnership on safety issues. For example, the CHP’s commercial inspectors save the trucking firms time and money by conducting inspections at the truck terminals rather than on the road, where delays cost the company money.



TRUCKS CLUSTER on the freeway with a CHP black and white in their midst on the lookout for traffic violations, particularly speed and rules-of-the-road violations.

The two organizations also have collaborated on the PrePass program, which allows trucking firms with good safety ratings to be weighed while rolling by the inspection facilities at highway speed.

The CHP has actively participated in the “No Zone” awareness campaign created by the federal Department of Transportation and supported by the CTA.

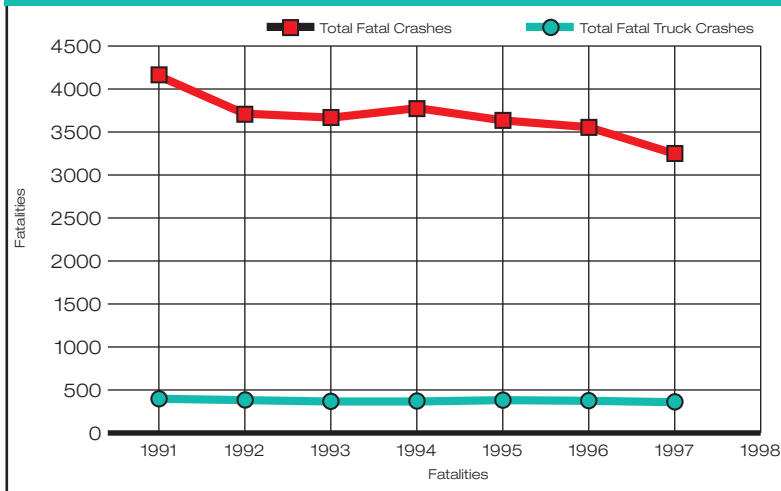
The “No Zone” campaign educates drivers, especially passenger vehicle drivers, on the visual constraints a trucker faces. Passenger vehicle drivers are warned to stay out of the trucker’s blind spots, pass quickly and allow plenty of room before cutting back in.

The “No Zone” campaign is aimed at reducing collisions caused by passenger vehicle driver errors. It makes highways safer for both passenger and commercial vehicles.

An enforcement and public awareness campaign entitled “On the Road to Safety,” funded by a federal grant, is scheduled to be conducted during 1999 to augment the CHP’s work on the commercial truck program.



TOTAL FATAL CRASHES COMPARED TO FATAL TRUCK CRASHES



THE “NO ZONE” campaign, promoted with a decal on the rear of this truck trailer, provides education to passenger car drivers on safest way to follow, pass and pull ahead of a truck. ►

◀ A TRUCK-TRAILER is pulled over, and an officer writes a citation.

